Bonn en-route to the G-15 Summit in Jamaica;

(b) if so, whether this decision was in protest against Germany's comments on attacks on Christians in Gujarat; and

(c) if not, the reasons for cancelling the visit?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) to (c) No, Sir. The visit could not take place for reasons connected with the programme an scheduling.

Decision on CTBT

360. SHRI NILOTPAL BASU:
SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned as 'India to sign CTBT in return for lifting sanctions: USA' Published in "Statesman" dated February 3, 1999;

(b) if so, whether it is a fact that Mr. James Rubin, the State Department spokesman virtually endorsed the outcome of the talks between the Foreign Minister, Shri Jaswant Singh and the U.S. Deputy Secretary of State, Mr. Strobe Talbott; and

(c) if so, the response of Government thereto and the reasons for Government to give such a commitment without having national consultation and evolving a consensus?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) In State Department briefing on February 1, 1999, the US Spokesman James Rubin Characterised the Indo-US dialogue as "productive" and mentioned that it "generated new momentum"

(c) Government's position on the CTBT is determined purely by considerations of national interest. The building of a national consensus will continue to guide the Government's approach to the CTBT.

The Indian position regarding CTBT remains as stated by the Prime Minister in UNGA in September, 1998 "India, having harmonised its national imperatives and security obligations and desirous of continuing to cooperate with the international community is now engaged in discussions with key interlocutors on a range of issues, including the CTBT. We are prepared to bring these discussions to a successful conclusion, so that the entry into force of the CTBT is not delayed beyond September 1999. We expect that other countries, as indicated in Article XIV of the CTBT, will adhere to this treaty without conditions."

India's Signing of CTBT

361. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL:
SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN:
SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA:
SHRI VAYALAR RAVI:
SHRI PARAG CHALIHA:
SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item published in the Hindustan Times dated 3rd February, 1999 captioned "India ready to sign test ban treaty, Talbott tells Albright" before September 1999 in return for lifting some of the more stringent sanctions imposed after its nuclear tests last May;

(b) if so, what are the details of eighth round of Indo-US talks held, recently in New Delhi and outcome thereof; and